community news

The Newsletter of the Community Church of Boston
A Peace and Justice congregation since 1920

February 2008

Winter Happenings Around the CCB...

by Jason Lydon, Congregational Director

Dear friends and members... 2008 is well on its way and we are well into our church season. Last month I updated you all on the possibility of a new dinner for homeless and hungry individuals in Copley Square and the surrounding areas. Since that last update I met, along with Jeff Herman, with some folks at St. John's ministry and the Doorbell Ministries to learn more about the process of developing such a program. It was suggested that because of the incredible cost and time it would take to develop the program, instead we should consider doing a drop-in center one morning during the week. St. John's church, by the State House, does a similar program on Monday mornings. This suggestion also came as something that has been more useful to homeless/under-housed/newly-housed individuals in Boston than another hot meal during the week.

We held a meeting at the church on Friday, January 18 with 4 people to talk about what a drop-in program would look like at the Community Church. Many ideas have been brainstormed and lots of unanswered questions have come up as well. How will we deal with the specific needs of individuals coming into the church? How will we get volunteers trained and able to deal with possible conflict? How will our space handle the new influx of people? How do we address concerns around drug and alcohol use and abuse? All of these are valid and important questions. I am hoping that one Sunday, before or after church, some folks who are interested will come together and work on answering some of these questions. When we choose a date to do this I will be sure to invite someone who has more experience than us to join our conversation. It was at the December Board meeting that we discussed the need to do our part as the weather was getting colder. Let us keep in our hearts, minds, and prayers those individuals who are stuck in the cold (ourselves, our friends, and the people we don't know).

Along with getting involved with the structuring and creating of this new possible program I need people to get involved in planning this year's congregational retreat. March 8th we will gather at the Peace Abbey, again, to see how we have done on our vision from two years ago; reflect on our strengths and areas of growth; and establish a vision for the coming years. If you have interest in helping with this event please let me know as soon as possible. In order for this retreat to serve everyone we need as many voices involved as possible.

Let us also remember that February is Black History Month. It is important for us to take time to learn the history that is not taught to us in schools, by the media, or in other mainstream spaces. It is not enough to learn the famous names of Martin Luther King Jr., Harriet Tubman, and George Washington Carver. Find out what voices have been silenced who fought in slave rebellions throughout the beginning colonization of this country. Find out whose voices have been lost in the Black Nationalist Movements here in the United States and in many countries in Africa. I encourage you to challenge yourself to learn some history this month that you did not know before. It is, of course, not enough to have the shortest, coldest, month set aside for Black History. Take that understanding as an invitation to yourself to use each month as a time to learn histories you have had hidden from you. Histories hidden from the mainstream are not an accident but rather an intentional silencing. Do not allow racism to dictate your knowledge; resist, revolt, and read!

COMMUNITY
CHURCH OF BOSTON

Sunday Service & Speakers Forum

in Lothrop Auditorium
Sundays at 11:00am

February 3rd
Superbowl Sunday
DAVE CZESNIUK
"The Power of Sport in Today's Society: Lessons Learned from the Ugly, the Bad & Even the Good!"

February 10th
JASON LYDON
"Racism's Power to Destroy Us All!"

February 17th
RAUL MATTA
"Dropping a Wrench in the Military Recruitment Machine"

February 24th
DAVID SWALLOW, JR.
(Wowitan Yuha Mani)
"A Global Warning for This Summer"

Upcoming CCB Meetings

Sunday, Feb. 10, 1:30pm
CCB Fiscal Meeting

Thursday, Feb. 21, 7:15pm
CCB Board Meeting

Sunday, Feb. 24, 1:30pm
CCB Program Committee

CCB Board Meeting

The Board of Directors met on January 17, 2008.
Following are highlights of the meeting.

The following members were present: David Broeg, Mary Ann Cromer, Dick Keshishian, John MacLeod, Ron Shapiro, Dean Stevens, Jason Lydon, *Congregational Director*

Congregational Director's Concerns: Jason was recently invited to the Highlander Center near Knoxville, Tennessee to work on resource development. He explained that the Center is engaged in popular education, incredible community work, Black & Brown dialogues, and examines how racism and other forms of bigotry divide the general population. The library of the well-known writer Upton Sinclair is located there. Martin Luther King Jr. and Ralph Abernathy were trained there. The Center was also the birthplace of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)

Justice School Report: Joo Young Choi, director of the Justice School, presented a comprehensive report on all facets of the Justice School. She also distributed a well-assembled booklet entitled "The Justice School Pre-Packet", Winter 2008.

The Justice School's planning committee is scheduled to meet at CCB the second Sunday of every month at 10:00am. Joo Young suggested that one board member plan to attend a monthly meeting.

Dean added that all Justice School family members and their children are welcome to attend the March 8th congregational retreat at the Peace Abbey in Sherborn.

Financial Concerns: Ron discussed profit and loss - emphasizing that expenses are exceeding income. Money must eventually be taken from the PAX Fund to satisfy the immediate needs of the office, i.e. the replacement of the copier and possibly the printer.

Various Concerns: The Prince Myshkins concert scheduled for Sunday, February 17th has been postponed to a later date.

The next meeting of the board is scheduled for Thursday, February 21, 2008 at 7:15pm, to which CCB members and friends are invited to attend.

-Dick Keshishian, *Clerk*

What's New with The Justice School?

by Joo Young Choi, Director of Children/Youth SJE Program

January was a busy month for the Justice School. We had our first Justice School Community Meeting and we also started our series of lesson plans focused on: respect, friendship, problem solving and community building.

The Justice School Community Meetings will be held the second Sunday of each month at 10:00 AM, the goal of this meeting is to help Justice School parents and congregation members connect and discuss how the Justice School can: reach out to new students, improve the lesson plans, brainstorm lists of new guest speakers or topics to learn about and also share new resources that could be added to the lesson plans or organizing of the Justice School. The format for the meetings are not only designed for adults but are also "child and youth friendly".

February 10th the Justice School Students their families and friends will be going on a Bread and Puppet field trip, if you are not a parent or student and you would like to attend the event with us, contact JooYoung for details.

Also, the students have been working on designing their own overnight retreat; already they have put together an event agenda and brainstormed a list of fun activities. The event will hopefully take place in either February or March, we are trying to find a date that will work for all the students. We hope that this retreat will help the students get to know each other better, have fun together and explore a form of community building that is a little longer than our usual time slot of 90 minutes.

A big thank you to everyone who donated paper supplies and snacks! Please continue to drop off supply donations and snacks for the students. **It is important to note one big change in donation requests, please donate food that is sealed and not homemade.** After discussing food donations with the board, I realized that taking **homemade food might not be good because of food allergies. It is important that we can read the ingredients just in case we have any students who are allergic** to things like peanut oil, certain preservatives, etc. At this point I don't believe we have anyone with any allergies, but just in case, being able to check the ingredients may be helpful in the future.

January has been a really fun month for me, working with the students on problem solving, community building, friendship and respect has been so wonderful. Not only have the students become friends but also I have noticed that the students have been building trust and friendship with me.

One of the gifts of teaching at the Justice School has been the ability to listen to the ideas, thoughts and feelings of my students. I try to see each of our students as people and not just as "kids". Surely, I may use the words "kid", "student", "child or youth" to refer to our Justice School participants, but I try to respond to each of them as a person who has their own opinions on how we can improve the lesson plans, as a person with their own thoughts and feelings about various social justice issues, as a person who should be taken seriously and not just labeled and stereotyped through ageist ideas, such as: **she's *just* a baby**, **she's *just* a kid**!

Recently, our students had a very interesting and intense conversation about Martin Luther King Day. We discussed why we do not have a Civil Rights Day, everyone participated and each student had her, per or his own feelings on the subject. After about 10-15 minutes of conversation we moved on to a different activity. As the students began to laugh and play and work with one another, I thought to myself, there is so much we can learn from these students.

So many times in our everyday life, we see people (or even ourselves) arguing about politics and then being unable to even be around one another. There is something incredibly mature about our students, their ability to explore one another's feelings about controversial issues and to not only openly disagree with one another but to also continue to play and work together. Some might say that it is because they are young and these issues don't mean enough to them for them to care, but I sincerely believe it has more to do with their ability to see people for not only their opinions or their political stance but to appreciate people as a whole person, for their laugh, their jokes, their creativity, their ability to solve problems, their ability to play, their ability to be kind and their ability to be a friend. There is a lot that the congregation can learn from the Justice School students, not only can they teach us about how peace, justice and activism but they can also teach us how to be activists who embrace the people around them…even when the people around them may not agree with their political beliefs.

Your continued support is deeply appreciated. Stay tuned for more info on volunteering, fun events and Justice School updates in next months newsletter.

You MUST MUST MUST MUST not miss Boston's evening with

The Prince Myshkins

Friday, February 22nd, 7:30pm
at Community Church of Boston

The Prince Myshkins (Rick Burkhardt, accordion, and Andy Gricevich, guitar) are the funniest and most bitingly brilliant political satirists you'll ever encounter. They also happen to be two of the most accomplished young players to come down the pike, as well as the tightest ensemble you've ever heard.

Admission: $15.00; reservations and information: 617-869-3014

Our Purpose

Community Church of Boston is a free community of women and men united for the study and practice of universal religion, seeking to apply ethical ideals to individual life and the democratic and cooperative principle to all forms of social and economic life.

Staff

Jason Lydon, *Congregational Director*
Joo Young Choi, *Director of Children/Youth SJE Program*
Mark Laskey, *Office Manager*
Luis Alonzo Guzman, *Custodian & Cook*
Xinli Xu, *Bookkeeper*
Jim Casteris, *Superintendent*

Board of Directors

Dean Stevens, *President*
Mary Ann Cromer, *Vice President*
Ron Shapiro, *Treasurer*
Dick Keshishian, *Clerk*

Christina Braidotti, David Broeg,
Selma Ganz, John MacLeod, Virginia Pratt

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